

NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING

& SUPPORT SERVICES

April 20, 2020

Donna Jerry
Green Mountain Care Board
144 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Transmitted electronically

Re: Northwestern Medical Center Emergency Department Modernization Project CON Docket
No. GMCB-003-19

Dear Green Mountain Care Board,

Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (NCSS) is a private, non-profit Designated Mental Health Agency serving Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. NCSS files this letter as part of the public comment pursuant to the Green Mountain Care Board's order in the Northwestern Medical Center Emergency Department Certificate of Need process.

NCSS behavioral health staff, a board member, and individuals in recovery have shared their thoughts and recommendations on the NMC Emergency Department Modernization Project. Numerous suggestions were brought forth to ensure appropriate care relative to the unique needs of each mental health patient.

As an example, during a walk through, there was an expression of concern for the window blinds. Patients who have been at ED in past have requested to avoid this room, saying the vertical blinds felt like "bars in a jail cell". Switching the blinds to horizontal would relieve this issue.

Some additional recommendations include, unbreakable TV's on both sides of the room to facilitate bed movement and viewing. Also, moving head to toe bed in the direction that is most comfortable for the patient and still allows nursing to perform their services. Some patients may want to face away from security and open door while others experience fear at having their back to incoming. Size of windows, natural light, and space for patients to move and exercise were among other recommendations.

We appreciate that NMC reached out to NCSS to solicit design input from the mental health community and the people we serve. NMC respectfully listened to their recommendations. NCSS applauds NMC's efforts to develop space designed to better meet the needs of those with mental health issues. We have confidence in how the NMC ED will be operated regarding patients with mental health needs and that the modernization represents a substantial improvement for all patients, including those with a mental health diagnosis.

We encourage the Green Mountain Care Board to approve the CON as submitted.

Respectfully,



Todd Bauman
Northwestern Counseling & Support Services, CEO